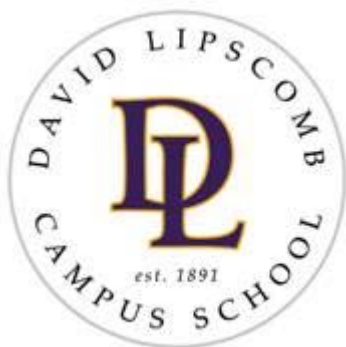


Tennessee Pollution Prevention Partnership Success Story



David Lipscomb Elementary
School
4517 Granny White Pike
Nashville, TN 37204
(615)966-1783

www.dlcs.lipscomb.edu



1-800-734-3619
www.tdec.net/ea/tp3

Hazardous Materials Clean-out Improves Health and Safety

The Member

David Lipscomb Elementary School (PK-4th grade) enrolls approximately 390 students. The school is a private Christian institution, with 46 faculty and staff. It is part of the Campus School system of Lipscomb University, located in Nashville, TN. While participating in the School Environment Evaluation (S.E.E.), unsecured chemicals were discovered in many classrooms. In preparation for a Fall 2008 EPA Audit, officials instigated a chemical clean-out in the elementary school. Teachers inspected their respective areas. Each discovered questionable materials and realized the need for a clean-out and a program of education to produce a safer school environment.

The Story

While participating in S.E.E., teachers were asked to go through their closets and cabinets to look for toxic substances and dangerous items. While checking, teachers discovered out-dated cleaners, empty paint cans, and other items that could prove hazardous to children. If the products are necessary in the classrooms, teachers have been asked to create an inventory list and change storage so that the items are inaccessible to children.

During the process, hazardous items were removed and inventories created in each workspace. Lists identifying 264 items in 33 workspaces are filed in the school office, as well as on-line. Each classroom maintains a list so that adults can access chemicals as needed.

The inventory of the science lab proved to be the most beneficial. At one time the high school science program used the science portable. There were many items left over from high school experiments, which remained tucked away in the cabinets. These were out-of-date chemicals and equipment now rated as unsafe (e.g., mercury thermometers). Forty-nine usable items found there (such as 2 gallons of 200-proof alcohol and iron filings) were moved to the high school lab or the university science department for proper storage and use. Unwanted materials (paints, paint thinners, bleach, acetone and other chemicals) were disposed of in an environmentally-approved manner. Elementary science lab chemicals and equipment were cataloged for quick reference and safe access.

The Success

During the clean-up process, personnel realized the need for education of both teachers and students. Faculty members participated in discussions about cleansers and classroom tools (e.g., dry erase markers) that could cause harm. Each teacher received a list of toxic items to compare with products used in their rooms.

Sixty-eight first-grade students participated in lessons about poisons. The children talked about how poisons enter the body and what to do in case of an accidental poisoning. Students discovered that anything can be considered poison if it is taken in the wrong amount, in the wrong way, or by the wrong person.

Third graders participated in a lab activity using the Envirosapes Model that focuses on hazardous waste and the watershed. It was a great visual lesson about non-point source water pollution, illustrating where waste goes when it leaves our homes and yards. Students left the lab with the understanding that there is really no such place as "away".

A representative from Poison Control will be a guest at the 4th grade Health Fair in the spring. All members of the student body and parents are invited to participate in this event.

The Pollution Prevented

Since the chemical clean-out, Lipscomb's facilities department has undergone a complete overhaul. Commonplace cleaners and chemicals are being used up and replaced with 'green seal' cleaning products (certified by Johnson and Johnson). In February 2008, institution-wide 'green' training began for maintenance and cleaning personnel. The group is being trained to use environmentally friendly products and to properly dispose of hazardous materials. University personnel were trained first, with elementary staff sessions to follow.

Completion of the hazardous waste clean-up is making David Lipscomb Elementary School a more healthy and safe place for students, faculty, and staff. Education of our school community is spilling over into the greater community, as our students discuss these concepts with their parents and others, who then follow our example.

March 2008